

THE DIRECTOR OF  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

National Intelligence Council

23 September 1985

NOTE FOR THE DIRECTOR

FROM: Herbert E. Meyer  
Vice Chairman, NIC

Here's the latest on SDI from Charlie  
Douglas-Home.

*HDM*

Herbert E. Meyer

Attachment:  
"Longbow or Shield"  
The Times, 20 Sept 85

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## LONGBOW OR SHIELD?

In the extracts from his book *The Bilton* which has been serialized in *The Times* this week, the author Daniel Ford suggests that the nuclear defences of the USA are so vulnerable to a Soviet attack that an administration might be left with little choice of survival in a global emergency other than to fire first. Such an analysis must be one of the strongest factors in favour of the development of the strategic defence initiative. It would relieve the USA from its current position of having to rely only on the threat of retaliation to deter the Soviet Union from firing first itself.

According to the book the Soviet Union is under no such illusion and has built up a formidable system of nuclear defences already. There are more than 2,000 bunkers capable of protecting 110,000 Soviet military officials and Party leaders. The author goes on to say that Soviet leaders have not yet built a cast iron network of shelters at the centre, but he overlooks the fact - certainly known to NATO - that the Kremlin has for two years been constructing the biggest bunker ever. It involves about 100 miles of tunnelling south of Moscow to a depth of at least 700 metres with a virtually impregnable control centre at its heart. The whole operation has involved tens of thousands of specially screened workers and has cost millions of pounds. We have not yet heard any details of that during the arms control discussions in Geneva (which resumed yesterday), but the existence of such a network combined with the enormous increase in offensive weapons leads to a sombre conclusion about Soviet offensive preparations.

Such a defensive network has coincided with an enormous research and development effort

into missile defences. Even this year the Soviet effort dwarfs the equivalent American programme for the strategic defence initiative. And yet Mr Gorbachev has the cynicism to insist that the Americans discontinue their research programme while he presumably hurries on with his.

It was thus reassuring to hear President Reagan state so emphatically again that the SDI is not negotiable during its research and development phase. It is not a bargaining chip at Geneva in exchange for purported reductions in the number of offensive Soviet missiles targeted on Europe. However, come the moment of deployment for any strategic defensive system, the President would then engage the Soviet leadership in discussing the attractive consequences of such a system: massive reductions in offensive missiles. The President was as clear as he has always been in his fundamental commitment to the philosophy and morality of strategic defence in preference to the fundamental immorality of not searching for a possible alternative to the doctrine of mutual retaliation as the sole means of defence in the nuclear age. It is not as if the world was short of evidence which showed that the Soviet Union is fully engaged in developing strategic nuclear defences. Why therefore is there this pressure on President Reagan to desist from a research programme which would at the very least tell us whether or not the Soviet Union could achieve a break-through in defensive systems and, if so, give us the opportunity to acquire such a system ourselves?

What is quite clear is that the President has been persistently let down by his bureaucracy, mostly, but not exclusively, in the State department. Some

members of the negotiating team at Geneva are also to blame. These officials have been determined to turn the SDI programme into a bargaining chip to be traded if necessary for Soviet proposed reductions in nuclear missiles trained on Europe. They have misrepresented the President all along and even yesterday were referring to his "intransigence" simply because he has once again reasserted his principled approach to SDI. He should not have to do so if he was served by a bureaucracy interpreting his views correctly rather than, in practice, giving West European allies and the Soviet Union a false impression that SDI would be on the table whatever the President had said. This official subversion in the administration goes deeper, by casting doubts on the technical feasibility of the SDI programme when all the technical achievements of the last two years shows its increasing potential.

Mr Reagan also dealt with the recently successful American test of an anti-satellite weapon system. It is the same story as with SDI. In the sense, as he said, that the United States were playing catch up. The Soviet Union has completed its testing programme of anti-satellite missiles. Could the West stand by and concede to the Soviet leadership a monopoly in the ability to shoot down satellites when so much depends on them in meteorology, civil and military communications and the ability to monitor major aspects of Soviet arms expansion? The President's difficulty is that, great communicator though he may be, his message is clouded by an unorganized and often dissident bureaucracy and countered by an effective Soviet propaganda machine playing on the latent anti-Americanism of so many educated Europeans.